A Philosophical and Spiritual Aspect of the Tribal Culture and Religion: A Comparative Study of the District of Purulia, Bankura and Jhargram

SYNOPSIS OF THESIS FOR Ph.D.

PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT

BINOD BIHARI MAHTO KOYLANCHAL UNIVERSITY

DHANBAD, JHARKHAND-82810

YEAR-2022

Research Supervisor- Dr. Rajesh Kumar

Assistant prof. Dept. of Philosophy

Binod Bihari Mahato Koylanchal University,

Dhanbad, Jharkhand-828130

Research Scholar- Rajesh Dan

State Aided College Teacher

Mahatma Gandhi College, Lalpur

Purulia, West Bengal-723101

A Philosophical and Spiritual Aspect of the Tribal Culture and Religion:

A Comparative Study of the District of Purulia, Bankura and Jhargram

Introduction: -

Man is the supreme human being on this earth by virtue of using his intellectual power. The means through which man has established his supremacy on this earth are his customs, rituals, philosophy religion, literature, language, art and so. Man is a social animal and he is governed by different social rules, customs, tradition and conventions.

A large variety of social groups have come into existence as per their diversity in culture, religion, habit, the way of leading their lives etc. Despite the similarities among these groups, we can notice a gulf of differences among them. Each of this group is in continuous conflict with each other for the sole purpose of gaining supremacy over the other. The conflict can be seen in the field of cultural, intellectual and ethnicity. Each of these groups aspects to gain social benefit in order to move on higher seat.

A group of people that shared ancestry and culture, while living in their own enclosed society are called Tribal people. The areas in which they live are either undeveloped or less developed. In the constitution of India these people have been described in different terms such as native peoples, aboriginal peoples, first nations, adivasi, janajati, hunter-gatherers and hill tribes. West Bangal is one of the states of India having majority of tribal population, especially in the districts of Purulia, Bankura and Jhargram.

The races like Santhal, sabar, kheria, Munda, birhad, Lodha, koda, Sardar, Kora, Mudi, etc are the tribal people living in this area. Though we notice a few similarities between their culture and religion, we also notice a great difference among these races as well.

Despite their differences in their culture, the customs of the tribal people living in the district of Purulia, Bankura and Jhargram. Most of the people ethnicity believes in God, wild animals or trees, hills, mountains, rivers etc, have retained their relationship with inanimate objects of nature.

The term culture denotes the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively. It's also refers to the ideas, customs and social behavior of a particular people or society.

Religion, on the other hand, denotes the belief in and worship of a super human controlling power especially a personal God or Gods. It may also refer to a particular system of faith and worship, a pursuit or interest followed with great devotion. The terms culture and religion are closely associated with philosophy.

Philosophy is the means by which every culture provides itself with justification for its values, belief and world view. Philosophy critically questions and confronts established beliefs, customs, practices and institutions of a society. Philosophy and religion are related as theory and practice. Philosophy renders religion more intelligible by explaining it. Religion provides religious data to philosophy. Religion can complete the philosophical explanation of life.

Preliminary Review of Literature:-

I have gone through a few books and am highly indebted to these books in making this study. These books as follows-

- Paschim Banger Adibasi Somaj by Dhirendra nath Baskey. The culture religion, customs and traditions of the tribal people have been portrayed graphically in this book.
- Traditions and Institutions of the Santals by P.O.Bodding: here we gate a picture of the tradition and institutions of the tribl peoples.
- The Philosophy of Religion – John Hick: here the relationship between religion and philosophy has been discussed in detailed and quite reliably.
- S. C Dubey's book Indian Society. This book provides us a picture of different rituals of the tribal people of India.
- Jangalmahal samaj, Sanskrity o Sahitya by Yasin Khan, here the culture, lifestyle, there literature and the philosophy of life have been discussed.
- Dharma o Samaj Darshan: Dr. Bimalendu Samanta, the philosophical perspective of religion and society has been focused very well.
- The books entitled Dharma Darshan, Written by different writer in separate book form such as Samarendra Bhattacharya, Pramodhbandhu Sengupta, Kalyan Chandra Gupta and Amitabha Bandopadhyay highlight the impact of religion on philosophy.

Apart from these books I am greatly indebted to a few article published in different journals such as international journal of

social science by Parikshit Chakraborty vol-7 (11,12-16) Nov 2018, ISSN no-2319-3565

Much discussion on the topic of culture and literature of the tribes. Discussion on the philosophical foundation behind the change in their culture and religion has not been made in great number. This research work will move forward with the issue in terms of ethics.

Problems:-

Despite the rise of science and information technology in the 21st century, the spirituality and religion centered culture of the tribal peoples has not yet been fully exposed to the world.

The philosophical review of their spirituality and religion centered culture is not yet complete.

Because the generation of tribal communities were very rigid, orthodox, superstitious, conservative, truthful, religious minded and emotional in nature. The younger people belonging to this ethnicity are much liberal so far as their culture and religion are concerned.

As a result of their interaction with the outside world, they have carried their primitive thoughts as well as assimilating newer, progressive and innovative thoughts which resulted in the upliftment of their social status despite preserving their own basic culture. They have progressed a lot in the field of education politics and economy.

As they are moving forward on the path of prosperity, the younger generation alienate themselves from their own culture and religion. AS

a result they are ignorant of their own culture and religion. Their primitive culture and religion have been ignored by the people belonging to this ethnic group.

No written and credible document of their culture and religion are available to us. The researches done so far on this topic are not adequate. Even there are a few paucity in these researches. As a result, the philosophical life of the tribal peoples has not been fully revealed. This study of mine will help them to highlight that unknown life philosophy.

Hypothesis:-

1. Philosophical analysis of the culture of the tribal people of Purulia, Bankura and Jhargram.
2. Discuss the nature of tribal's philosophy of life.
3. To determine the importance of the primitive culture of the tribes.
4. To explore the way to the progress of society by keeping the primitive culture alive.

Objectives-

The objectives of my research work on this particular topic are –

- ❖ Highlight the different aspects of tribal culture and religion in the district of Purulia, Bankura and Jhargram.

- Discuss the problems of the tribal people in the present day context.
- Acceptability of the cultural and religious aspects of the tribal people in the present day context.
- The contextual aspects of laying stress on the primitive culture.
- To find out the lake of veracity in the artificial view of civilized and uncivilized society.
- To unleash the unknown facts of their culture and religion.
- A venture to analyze the fact how their philosophy of life can be assimilated in the main stream of philosophy.

Research Questions:-

The research questions that can be gleaned from the above discussion are –

- Whether the issue of changing the culture of the tribal people is just and appropriate or whether it should be left completely unchanged?
- Whether the march of the tribal people towards prosperity is a blessing or curse?
- Whether the religion and culture of the tribal people have any perceptible impact on our present day society?
- How their culture and religion have gradually developed?
- What are the philosophical aspects of the changes?

Sources and Methodology:-

To carry on the above mentioned objectives I have to pay due importance to the primary as well the secondary sources.

Primary sources: - in course of carrying on the objectives I will the emphasize on the primary sources. Here I will follow up ethnographic method which denotes a research approach where one looks at a group of people or race in their culture and milieu, with the hope of bringing out narrative account of their particular culture. Collecting information through interviews and questionaries' will also we carried out at the same time.

Secondary sources: - Books, articles, bulletins, magazines, journals, web searches etc. will be used by me as means of secondary sources for carrying on this research work. Critical analysis will be made on these sources.

Apart from primary and secondary sources I will make use of theoretical method and observation method. The museums and libraries of these districts will be visited by me physically for collective data.

Research Tools:-

Many types of books, computers, charts, digital sources, web searches, manuscripts, and audio visual tools.

Significance of the Proposed Work:-

Focusing on the tribal philosophy along with the detail analysis of their culture and religion.

Limitations:-

- The area of research work is the district of Purulia, Bankura, and Jhargram.
- The information collected through interviews may be antagonistic in opinion. Ambiguity may also be there in the way of expression.
- Language problems
- Lake of time
- Only their cultural and religion aspect are to be dealt with keeping all the other aspects aside.

Future Work:-

This research work on the tribal people of these three districts will inspire a number of research scholars to rejuvenate this topic in future. It will inspire the tribal people to preserve their primitive culture firmly. Apart from preserving their primitive culture the people, belonging this community will move on the path of progress of the society.

Probable Chapterization:-

Introduction: Despite using the terms adibasi janajati and tribe synonymously they are difference in the meaning of these words. The term tribe which occupies a place in the constitution of India refers to include the tribal people living in these districts.

1. Culture and social differences of the tribals in the district of Purulia, Bankura and Jhargram.

The tribal peoples have not lost their social identity even after living with Hindus and Muslim for centuries, their adherence to social norms is more important than rules of state. As evidenced by their system of justice. The social system of non-Adibasi did not fully affect the social infrastructure of the tribal peoples. Hindus like Brahmins are divided in to Kshatriya, vaishya, shudra which shows than muslim are also divided into syed, shekh, pathan and desi muslims, but this imitation was not seen among the tribals.

Moreover the greatest proof of the uniqueness of their culture is that the still do not believe in idolatry.
The major groups belonging to tribal community are santal,bhumij,munda,Lodha,shabar or sabar, bora,mahali,Sardar,kheria,etc. the people belonging to kurmi community were treated as tribal people in the past, but now a days they are listed as backward class people belong into lower Hindus. Although the religious customs and culture of the Purulia Bankura and Jhargram tribes are very similar, there are many

differences between them. Diversity can be noticed in their way of life, culture and religion

2. Spirituality and faith in the tribal culture and religion:-

Spirituality is the centrality of any religion. Spirituality is the union of body, mind and soul, knowing God, experiencing moral transformation, the dynamics of faith, the life led by the soul and the union of creation with the Creator.

Usually the one who is conscious in every moment of life is spiritual. Each religion has its own spirituality, based on the culture and religion of the tribal peoples that will be discussed here. Based religious festivals and analysis of their philosophical judgment.

Here a philosophical analysis on the tribal culture and religion will be made and the impact of their culture and religion of their philosophy of life will also be done. The tribal peoples are basically the worshipper of nature. There is a close relationship between their culture is associated with concepts of magic. From their culture and religion a new philosophy of thought springs.

3. The social status of the ethnic people in contemporary Indian siciety:-

In the 21st century, each nation has come to a completely different stage in its social evolution, and as tribal communities have adapted to that evolution, their cultures have changed their

religious practices, resulting in some positive aspects as well as some negative ones. .

On the negative side, they are moving away from the mainstream of society, yet they are being exploited and neglected by the upper class people, the influence of non-tribal peoples on the tribal peoples is increasing day by day, they are suffering from various economic problems. Unable to cope, they are selling their land and even the land.

On the positive side, in present day the tribal people come forward to assimilate themselves in the light of the progress of the outside world. A large number of tribal people play leading role in difference spheres of life. Such as political, social, economic. Different planes and projects by the Government, central as well as state, have their positive impetus on their way to progress and prosperity. For example, among the tribal communities, the Santal community has occupied a special place economically and politically which other indigenous peoples could not. E.g –**Smt.Sandhya Rani Tudu**,'' Minister of State for Paschimanchal Unnayan Affairs (Independent Change), Government of West Bengal' 'is a santal woman.

4. Conflict of ideas and faith: Impact of conversion and modernism:-

There is no society in the world where there is no religious belief or idea. Every religion has some superstitions, which lead to some misconceptions and people continue their religious and social activities by clinging to those misconceptions. But not all beliefs

are recognized in terms of the relevance of the present context, which creates a conflict between ideas and beliefs. Ideas should always be consistent with beliefs, philosophy of religion also acknowledge that, tribal peoples also have some religious beliefs and misconceptions that do not conform to reality. As a result, they relax some of the basic tenets of that belief, transform it, and engage themselves in the mainstream of modern civilization. The situation is similar in Purulia Bankura and various Indigenous people of Jhargram.

The progression of the tribal people from their primitivism to prosperity has its benevolent impact on the people belong in to this community. It has its malevolent impact on their lives as well. Its leads then to pay little heed to social values which gradually takes the form of racial hatred. Thus they have been affected by social change. This chapter will discuss that.

5. **Similarities and differences of culture and religion of the tribes of Purulia, Bankura and Jhargram**:-

   Here will be explained in details the similarities and differences between the tribal peoples living in Purulia, Bankura and Jhargram in the basis of their culture and religion.

   At the time of detail analysis on this topic the more chapters might be added.

Conclusion:-

If the tribal people do not preserve their primitive culture and run towards the path of prosperity in the context of social change, a time will come when there will be no trace of their culture and religion. Therefore , they should try their best to keep their culture and religion alive even in the midst of social change otherwise their primitive culture will be extinct as a result of this mixed culture. Long with modernization they have to pay due importance to their culture, literature and religion to keep it thriving through the ages to come.

References:-

- Somaj Darshan by Anadi Kumar Mahapatra, Suhrid Publ.2018 p-725
- Bose, P.K. (1979): Agrarian Structure, Peasant Society and Social Change: A Study of Selected Regions in West Bengal. Ph. D. Thesis, JNU, New Delhi.
- International Journal of Social Science by Parikshit Chakroborty vol-7(11, 12-16 Nov 18) ISSN No – 23193565
- Emeraldgrouppublishing.com website: Use Ethnographic Methods & Participant Observation
- https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329773449_Tribal_religious_beliefs_and_practices_an_anthropological_study_on_Kora-Mudi_tribe

- Mudi_tribehttps://www.researchgate.net/publication/329773449_Tribal_religious_beliefs_and_practices_an_anthropological_study_on_Kora-Mudi_tribe

- https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329773449_Tribal_religious_beliefs_and_practices_an_anthropological_study_on_Kora-Mudi_tribe-

Bibliography

- Traditions and Institutions of the Santals – P.O.Bodding (Gyan Publishing House-2016)
- Paschim Bonger Adibasi Somaj- Dhirendranath Baskey (Paschim Banger Adibasi Academy)
- The Philosophy of Religion –John Hick
- Banga Sanskritite Prak Baidik Prabhab- Dhirendranath Baskey (Shantosi Printers 1992)
- Santal o Missionary – Suranjan Middey
- Dharma Darshan- Pramodh bandhu Sengupta
- Dharma Darshan (The Philosophy of Religion)- Kalyan Chandra Gupta and Amitabh Bandopadhyay
- Dharma Darshan – Samarendra Bhattacharya
- Adibasi Puran- Khokon, Salek(Jagriti Prokashoni 2017)
- Dharma o Somaj Darshan –Dr. Bimalendu Samanta (Arambag Book House 2001)
- Dharma o Somaj Darshan- Dr. Samarendra Bhattacharya (Book Syndicate pvt ltd 2014)
- Bharoter Adibasi: somaj poribesh o songram- Suchibroto sen (Book post Publ. Kolkata
- Bharotiya Adibasi: Amal Kumar Mandal, Desh Prokashon
- Bharat Itihase Nimno Borger Nari Shromik: Unish Theke Bish Shatok; Amal das, Progotisil prokasok
- Tribal Justice :Yogesh Pratap Singh Suvrashree Panda.EBC
- Tribal Philosophy : Dr. Shewli Dutta

❖ Tribal India And Social Thought : Venkata Mohon